AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-56 **(Cancelled)**

57. **(Previously presented)** An image coding method comprising:

dividing an input image signal corresponding to an image into image signals corresponding to individual local regions of the image;

deciding a filter characteristic for each local region of the input image signal on the basis of image feature data of each local region;

performing adaptive filtering; and

coding the input image signal for each local region.

58. **(Previously presented)** An image coding method comprising:

dividing an input image signal corresponding to an image into image signals corresponding to individual local regions of the image;

deciding a filter characteristic for each local region of the input image signal on the basis of the frequency distribution of image feature data of each local region over a predetermined period;

performing adaptive filtering; and

coding the image signal for each local region on the basis of the decided filter characteristic.

59. **(New)** An image coding method as described in claim 57, wherein each of the filter characteristic and the quantization characteristic decided for each local region is compensated by comparison between itself and that obtained by averaging filter characteristics or quantization characteristics of plural local regions adjacent to the target local region.

60. **(New)** An image coding method as described in claim 57, wherein the image feature data of each local region is at least one of the following data: the average of absolute difference in luminance signals between adjacent pixels, the average of absolute difference in color-difference

signals between adjacent pixels, the value of average luminance signal, the value of average color-difference signal, the variance of luminance signal, the variance of color-difference signal, the value representing the amount of motion, and representative vector data in color space.

61. **(New)** An image coding method as described in claim 57, wherein the filter characteristic is adaptively decided according to the image feature data of each local region and a control signal supplied from the outside.

62. **(New)** An image coding method as described in claim 61, wherein the control signal supplied from the outside is at least one of the following values: the accumulated value of absolute value of frame or field pixel difference over an N (N: natural number) frame period of the input image signal, the accumulated value of quantity of coded data over an M (M: natural number) frame period, and the ratio of quantity of coded data in each frame.

63. **(New)** An image coding and decoding method for coding the image feature data of each local region as well, in an image coding method described in claim 57, further comprising:

recording a coded data sequence; and

at the time of reproduction, decoding the coded data sequence, and subjecting each local region of the decoded image signal to adaptive filtering on the basis of the image feature data of the decoded local region.

64. **(New)** An image coding method as described in claim 58, wherein each of the filter characteristic and the quantization characteristic decided for each local region is compensated by comparison between itself and that obtained by averaging filter characteristics or quantization characteristics of plural local regions adjacent to the target local region.

65. **(New)** An image coding method as described in claim 58, wherein the image feature data of each local region is at least one of the following data: the average of absolute difference in

luminance signals between adjacent pixels, the average of absolute difference in color-difference signals between adjacent pixels, the value of average luminance signal, the value of average color-difference signal, the variance of luminance signal, the variance of color-difference signal, the value representing the amount of motion, and representative vector data in color space.

66. **(New)** An image coding method as described in claim 58, wherein the filter characteristic is adaptively decided according to the image feature data of each local region and a control signal supplied from the outside.

67. **(New)** An image coding method as described in claim 66, wherein the control signal supplied from the outside is at least one of the following values: the accumulated value of absolute value of frame or field pixel difference over an N (N: natural number) frame period of the input image signal, the accumulated value of quantity of coded data over an M (M: natural number) frame period, and the ratio of quantity of coded data in each frame.

68. **(New)** An image coding and decoding method for coding the image feature data of each local region as well, in an image coding method described in claim 58, further comprising:

recording a coded data sequence; and

at the time of reproduction, decoding the coded data sequence, and subjecting each local region of the decoded image signal to adaptive filtering on the basis of the image feature data of the decoded local region.